

goes up, each TEXAS Grant costs more money. We are not putting enough money in to keep up with the cost of tuition deregulation.

Let's look at the raw numbers. In spring 2003, the statewide average designated tuition was set at \$550 per semester (15-hours). In fall 2003 -- the last semester in which the Legislature had control of setting tuition rates -- the statewide average was \$625. By spring 2004, the average had risen to \$715 per semester; fall 2006, the statewide average has soared to \$1,128. The cost at our flagship and major public universities is even higher, with tuition increasing by more than 100 percent at the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University.

Higher education in Texas was once one of the best bargains in the nation; now, we are one of the least affordable. The cost of going to college in Texas now exceeds the national average; when you take into account the median income in Texas is below the national average, it is no wonder why Texas now receives an "F" when it comes to college affordability. If we continue down this path, allowing tuition to go up and up and up, fewer and fewer Texas families will be able to afford the rising cost of college.

To deal with this issue, I filed several bills -- SB 96, SB 577, SB 578, and SB 579 -- to reign in tuition deregulation, from capping it at 5 percent per year to virtually eliminating it after 2009. Unfortunately, each bill failed to pass the Senate.

This issue is not going to go away. More and more Texas families are feeling the pinch of skyrocketing college costs and a severe crisis is blooming. I predict we will be back here in two years wrestling with this issue again.



### **Securing Funding for TSU and Prairie View A&M**

This session I authored a bill that would have given the Governor some additional authority to reorganize universities and state agencies that are in financial trouble. My legislation would have prevented TSU and other universities from being put under a conservatorship that would have created accreditation problems. Unfortunately, that legislation did not pass but we were still able to secure some additional funding for Texas Southern University. The Governor has appointed a new Board of Regents which will develop a reorganization plan which will address the financial problems at TSU.

I worked hard to ensure that Texas Southern University will receive \$13.6 million for maintenance, repairs, contractual payments and provide funding for summer school contingent upon the university developing a suitable plan of reorganization or the appointment of a conservator. In addition, in 2008 and 2009 TSU will receive \$12.5 million each year for the Academic Development Initiative to be used for proven academic programs, existing graduate programs, undergraduate education and initiatives to target enrollment growth. This money is also contingent upon the university developing a suitable plan of reorganization or the appointment of a conservator.

### **Improving access to affordable quality healthcare**

#### ***Partial Restoration of CHIP***

This session I introduced SB 337, which would have fully restored the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Since legislative cuts to the program were enacted in 2003, over 200,000 children have lost their CHIP coverage. Although SB 337 did not pass, the Legislature did partially restore the cuts. As a result, 127,000 more children will have access to quality, affordable health insurance. Despite record spending in this budget, there are still over 1 million Texas children who lack healthcare--the highest number in



the nation. While we made significant strides in this area, there is still much to be done.

***Historic Cancer Research Initiative HJR 90, HB14 and the Statewide Smoking Ban (SB 368)***

Perhaps one of the greatest legacies of the 80th Texas legislature will be our passage of a plan to create a \$3 billion dollar cancer research fund allowing Texas to lead the nation in finding a cure for cancer.

I am proud to have led another effort to fight cancer that would have cost us very little--enacting a statewide smoking in public places. Unfortunately, despite overwhelming support by a majority of Texans, this measure did not pass. I plan to continue to work on this important issue that will save lives and save our state billions of dollars in health care costs over time.

I authored SB 453 and SB 1175/HB 1944 effort to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in our communities and combat incidences of sexual assault. The prevalence of HIV infection in Texas' prisons is nearly five times that of the general population. SB 453 requires mandatory HIV testing of inmates upon entry into a state correctional facility. Individuals who are aware of their HIV status are less of a risk for spreading the infection and can get the proper early treatment to decrease the long term medical costs.

***Sexual Assault Prevention - SB 1175/HB 1944***

The public safety of all Texans is affected by the sexual violence that occurs in our prisons. Those who are victims of sexual assault in prison are at greater risk of contracting diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C, and suffer from long-term psychological problems. HB 1944 creates the position of Ombudsperson in the Office of the Inspector General to monitor prevention and investigation policies to ensure impartial resolution of inmate complaints of sexual